

and at last succumbed to love of her.

Bruington was a friend of Richard T. Smith, the railroad conductor, who became engaged to Mrs. Vermilya and to whom befall the fate of all those whom Mrs. Vermilya loved. He died of "gastritis."

Bruington suspected something wrong about Smith's sudden death, and made love to Mrs. Vermilya in order the better to watch her. He finally fell in love with her himself.

The letters are extraordinary for the light manner in which they treat death, for their carefulness in all their references to Smith and to the relations between the writer and Bruington.

Dear Brother:

I wish you were here in Chicago. I surely am lonesome lots of evenings, and I would enjoy your company.

I guess Dick did keep most of his plans to himself, especially those concerning our wedding, for it was my wish to keep everything quiet as possible until after the ceremony. I am still in deepest mourning on account of the death of my only son—who died just five months ago. And Dick, too, had every reason to keep things quiet.

No, he could not say other than that I was "nice." He always was held at a safe distance and respected as he should be as a future husband. He was very dear to me. I had every reason to love and admire him. * * *

Hoping you are well and in excellent spirits, and that things are coming your way, I am. Bye, bye. Sincerely,

Louise V.

Dearest Friend:

I was at my nephew's baby's funeral at Barrington, Ill., Wednesday, and so was not at home all day.

Yesterday evening we went over to Ella's and Laura was taken with terrible cramps, so we hustled her upstairs and called a physician and she had poison from canned mushrooms and was deathly sick.

She is very weak today and is trying hard to sleep. But her throat and chest are raw with vomiting, and the doctor washed out her stomach with water that had some dope in it, that was bitter. She is having a hard time.

I am very busy just now, Tom, as I want to run up and see how Laura is. Do come down, as I should have more time to visit you here. So, good-bye, dearie. Yours ever,

Lou.

Dear Brother:

I am awaiting your visit in the next few weeks—the middle of April. I surely will see that we have some good automobile rides about the city when you come.

Tom, you ask about my late husband. He was the best man I ever knew. He was the kindest husband a woman could have. My life with him was a most happy one. He died some time ago of